

**World Wildlife Fund**  
**Technical, Educational and Policy Assistance**  
**For Conservation in the Russian Far East Ecoregion**

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**Quarterly Report**  
**Fourth Quarter, FY00**  
**(July - September 2000)**

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This report describes the activities of World Wildlife Fund's project "Technical, Educational and Policy Assistance for Conservation in the Russian Far East Ecoregion" during the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2000 (July - September 2000), under Cooperative Agreement #118-A-00-95-00303-00 with USAID. The main objectives of this project are to increase the long-term sustainability of nature conservation in the Russian Far East by:

1. Establishing a Small Grant Program to support biodiversity conservation initiatives.
  2. Building ecotourism capacity in and around nature reserves to increase public support for conservation and generate income for nature protection activities.
  3. Providing assistance to improve fire response capability including:
    - 3.1. Increase public awareness on fire prevention – Design a National Strategy
    - 3.2. Improve interagency cooperation on fire identification and suppression
    - 3.3. Provide technical assistance on purchasing radio communication equipment and fire fighting equipment for mobile forest fire fighting teams
  4. Ensuring the sustainability of the USAID funded project results
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## **Highlights of Project Accomplishments during the Fourth Quarter FY00**

### ***1. Establishing a Small Grant Program to support biodiversity conservation initiatives***

#### **Major Implementation Accomplished This Quarter:**

- 42 consultations on proposal writing were conducted;
- 2 outreach seminars on proposal writing were held;
- The program was presented at different meetings;
- 240 information letters were sent;
- Regret letters of second round were sent out;
- 5 site visits were conducted;
- CRDF's GAP application forms were filled out;
- Terms of references for each grantee were agreed;
- 10 publications in press were made

#### **Consultations on proposal writing**

42 consultations on proposal writing were made on a daily basis. 20 were personal consultations, 16 consultations were on the phone, and 6 responses to written information requests were sent. Each consultation was registered in a special journal. In the this quarter, consultations were provided less than last quarter due to the summer season when people were out of city for several months (vacation, field research, etc).

#### **Outreach Seminars**

A seminar on proposal writing was conducted on August 11, in Irkutsk. Ten participants from five organizations took part in the seminar. Besides instructions on how to write a proposal, different questions from grant giving practice were answered and information on alternative funding was provided.

Another seminar on proposal writing was conducted on October 3, in Khabarovsk. Forty- Five participants from twenty-four organizations participated in the seminar. The seminar was organized and conducted together with the ROLL 2000 program staff. Information on each part of RFA was explained and different questions were answered. Twenty RFAs and Information letters were disseminated at the seminar.

#### **Information letter**

Information letters were sent out in July. Information letter includes the total sum of grant money disbursed, name of the project and project summary. All projects were grouped according to the project implementation area. Comparative data on received and financed projects is also included in the Information letter.

**Regret letters**

Regret letters explaining reasons for project rejection were prepared and sent to those who lost the competition. Reasons for rejection were written based on the analysis of the independent experts' comments. This time the approach of explaining the reasons of rejection was changed. In the regret letter, concrete advice on how to improve the project was given based on the experts' comments. For the time being, we have received no accusations from losers that we replied formally and did not use individual approach.

**Site visits**

Five site visits were conducted in this quarter. The Program Coordinator met with coordinators of 5 projects funded during the second grant round.

- The Program Coordinator visited Astafiev, Terney of Primorskii krai on July 11, 2000 to discuss how to assist the project "Technical Assistance to Ecological Center". Future activities in the field of environmental education in the ecological center were discussed; plans and design of the future museum at the center were shown.
- On July 12, 2000, the Program Coordinator visited the project "Protection of Marine Biological Resources and Coastal Line of the Sea of Japan" by Litvinov, Terney of Primorskii krai. Members of sea brigade were introduced to the Program Coordinator. Scheme of patrolling the territory was presented. A motor boat to be used for the patrolling activity was shown.
- On August 14, 2000, the Program Coordinator was in Irkutsk visiting the project "Strategy for Snow Sheep Conservation in Amurskaya Oblast". The Project Coordinator also told about his trip to Blagoveshensk, Amurskaya oblast where the project is going to be implemented and about his meeting with Yuri Darman, the project advisor. They discussed the project work plan and clarified the sphere of responsibilities.
- The Program Coordinator went to see project "Work With Local Population Aimed at Biodiversity Conservation in Ussuriiskii District", Bisikalova, Ussuriisk, Primorskii krai on August 5, 2000. The Coordinator visited the ecological center, met with kids in the environmental activities. The Program Coordinator also participated in one of the classes on environmental education. During the visit, the Program Coordinator took the opportunity to give an interview to the local TV company in which brief information on the project was given and a short overview on the environmental activities in the protected territories supported through the Small Grant Program was presented.
- The Program Coordinator met with project executant of "Improvement of Protection System in the "Sikhote-Alinskii" Nature Monument's Territory" on July 7-8, 2000. A two-hour excursion around the territory of the nature monument and to the rehabilitation center was undertaken. Feeding grounds were showed. During the meeting the questions of grant receiving mechanism and requirements for submitting project reports were discussed.

**CRDF's GAP Application Forms for the Second Round**

Filling out CRDF's GAP application forms is an important part of the program. It is filled out by the WWF-FRE program staff and serves as a basis for further interaction between sponsor-organization and sub-grantee. The GAP form includes several sections such as project summary, contact information and passport data on each project executor, detailed project budget, and name of the executive organization. To fill out the forms the program administration holds a

close and permanent contact with sub-grantees and CRDF RFE's representative Tamara Terekhova. The experience of the first grant round showed us that it makes sense to discuss each budget with her and consider all her recommendations before filling out GAP forms. So, the first stage of the budget preparation process was to make up a preliminary budget version and send it to Tamara Terekhova. After her comments on each concrete budget, a final budget version is prepared and put into GAP form. Beside GAP forms, CRDF needs proposal itself and congratulatory letter to be sent. So, all these materials are copied and mailed to CRDF by Express mail.

### **Terms of references for each grantee**

During the reporting period, work plans of the winning projects were agreed upon between each project coordinator and project advisor (Advisor is usually a WWF-RFE staff who is assigned to each sub-grantee). In some cases project activities were defined more clearly, some projects were advised to add few activities. Deadlines for work plans, intermediate and final reports were agreed upon with the project coordinators. Thus, Terms of References for each of sub-grantee that includes expected results section and reporting periods were prepared. (For your information, TOR is inserted into the CRDF's Award Notice and is considered to be its integral part).

### **Integrated analysis of the first and second grant rounds results**

Integrated comparative analysis of the first and second grant rounds results consists of several graphic areas (see attached). Comparative statistic analysis of the first and second grant rounds results was presented at the program presentations, during outreach seminars and submitted to all interested parties upon request.

### **Project evaluation criteria form was improved**

Project evaluation criteria form was changed based on comments of one of the independent experts from Amurskaya oblast.

So, the maximal point for the budget section was raised up to 10 (instead of 5 in the second round). For the second level projects an additional criterion was introduced to the budget section such as "the project suggests applicant's or other parties' contribution". Also, an additional criterion was introduced to the additional criteria section "proposal is written in accordance with the Instruction (which means that all project parts are described and all answers are given). The weight of each criterion was increased from 2 to 5 points. Thus, the total point sum for the proposal was raised from 80 (in the second round) up to 105 for the first level proposals and 110 for the second level proposals.

Also, a special requirement for letters of support was included. Letters of support should express specific interest of an organization in the project's results (for what purposes, how and when they will be used); or should confirm positive experience gained during previous cooperation with the applicant describing the details of this cooperation. General comment for several projects (when one organization submits several proposals) is not considered to be a letter of support and is not taken into account while calculating the total point sum.

### **Publications in press/interviews on TV and radio**

For the period reported information on the second grant round was published:

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- The “Call of the Taiga” magazine #3 issue, a press release on the second Advisory board meeting, Vladivostok, Primorskii Krai;
- The “Far Eastern Bulletin” newspaper, article “Environmental camp in the village of Andreevka” (information about one of the sub-grantee), 23.08.00, Vladivostok, Primorskii Krai;
- The “Far Eastern Assembly” newspaper, article “Money – for life”, information on the results of the second grant round, 13.09.00, Vladivostok, Primorskii Krai;
- The “Seven Days in Primorye” newspaper, “Under the patronage of students”, information on young foresters’ clubs supported through the small grant program, 14.09.00, Vladivostok, Primorskii Krai;
- The “Vladivostok” newspaper, monthly supplement, three issues dedicated to the protected areas territories including those supported by the small grant program, July, August, September, 2000, Vladivostok, Primorskii Krai;
- The “Call of the Crane” newspaper of the Amurskaya branch for the Social-ecological union, article “Our forests are under the care of children and Americans” dedicated to the WWF’s activities in biodiversity conservation in Amurskaya oblast, 09.09.00, Blagoveshensk, Amurskaya oblast;
- The “Call of the Crane” newspaper of the Amurskaya branch for the Social-ecological union, article “Students’ anti-poaching brigade “Snow leopard” needs training” about the students activities in nature conservation, 09.09.00, Blagoveshensk, Amurskaya oblast;
- The “Amurskaya pravda” newspaper, information on the program and on the “A Step to the Future of Amursky Region” project, 02.08.00, Blagoveshensk, Amurskaya oblast;
- Vostok-TV television program, brief news on the program results, 05.08.00;
- State Radio Company, three interviews on the “Morning ether”, “Environment”, and “During lunch break ” radio programs on the progress of some projects funded by the Small Grant Program, July 2000.

### **Travel/Meetings**

On September 21, 2000, a program presentation was made to the USAID and Winrock International representatives. Brief information on the Program’s objectives, priority topic areas, levels of financing, management structure of the program including composition of the Advisory Board and independent experts’ corps was given. Handouts were distributed including RFA, lists of financed projects for the 1st and 2nd grant rounds, two success stories, and statistical data with diagrams.

On August 4, 2000, the Program was presented to representatives of UNDP/GEF-Tumen River SAP Project. Public awareness component of the Program turned out to be the main focus of the guests’ interest. Most questions were asked on the work with community (examples of projects funded, names of organizations-sub-grantees).

During the three months period, the Program Coordinator met with executants of projects funded during the second grant round: Feoktistov (JAO), Goloveshko (Khabarovskii krai), Sushitskii (Primorskii krai), and Dalin (Khabarovskii krai). Details of financial management system and grant payment mechanism were discussed. Reporting issues were also raised. Brief information on participation in the third grant round was also given. For example, one of the peculiarities of the Program is that an organization can reapply even if the previous project is not yet completed

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but the organization submitted interim project report and it was approved by the Program Coordinator and CRDF's representative.

#### **Plans for the next quarter:**

- Consultations on proposal writing;
- Receiving proposals and their registration in data base;
- Selecting independent experts for the third round;
- Holding third round of competition;
- Conduction of the third Advisory Board meeting;
- Input information into the program Web-site;
- Receiving and processing of interim and final project reports;
- Conducting outreach seminars on proposal writing

#### **Attachments:**

- Integrated analysis of the first and second grant rounds results;
- Project Evaluation Criteria Form.

## ***2. Building ecotourism capacity in and around nature reserves to increase public support for conservation and generate income for nature protection activities***

#### **Major Implementation Accomplished This Quarter:**

The USAID/WWF Ecotourism Development Program made important progress in late summer months and hosted numerous visitors to the region. After some initial delays, the Program transferred funds to nine infrastructure development projects in late September. Also, the project sponsored "demonstration tours" with Wharton Business School, the Wild Salmon Center and several private tour operators. WWF staff conducted site visits to project sites and sponsored several press conferences to promote the ecotourism program and related activities. WWF financial officers designed a new budget format in September and the program adapted the previous budget categories to the new format. Also in September, the program hired Konstantine Zgurovsky as marketing consultant and Grigory Bolman as technical consultant for information systems. This quarterly report summarizes activities/achievements in several areas:

- Infrastructure development
- Marketing and demonstration tours
- Budget issue
- Chronology of events
- Plans for the next quarter

#### **Infrastructure Development**

By the end of September, the project transferred funds to nine projects for infrastructure. Each project has a two-part payment schedule with final funds to be provided upon successful completion of the first stage. According to the workplan, we planned to transfer infrastructure funds earlier in the summer. However, we met with unexpected delays in preparing ecotourism

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grants that are consistent with WWF protocol for grants usually provided for bioconservation purposes. Nonetheless, we resolved all problems and transferred funds in time for each project to complete building plans for next summer. This will keep the program on schedule. Table 1: Infrastructure Projects Payment Schedule summarizes payments for each project.

**Table 1:**  
**Infrastructure Projects Payment Schedule**

<b>Project title/organization</b>	<b>First stage (July 1, 2000 – Dec 31, 2000)</b>	<b>Second stage (Jan 1, 2000 – June 30, 2001)</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
<b>Infrastructure development:</b>			
Lazovsky Zapovednik: Tiger coast	11,500	11,063	22,563
Khankaisky Zapovednik: Lotus and cranes	14,000	13,636	27,636
Gamov Peninsula: Primorsky coast	5,000	10,000	15,000
Primorye Nature Parks: Ginseng ecotours	4,100	-	4,100
Samarga River basin: Agzu tribal village	5,000	7,090	12,090
Bolshekhkhtsyrsky Zapovednik: Bolshoy Khekhtsyr mountain range	6,000	5,100	11,100
Sikhote-Alin Nature Park: Wild animal rehabilitation center	9,580	5,975	15,555
Chukensky Zakaznik: Udege people's revival	18,300	6,700	25,000
Khingansky Zapovednik: Lake of white birds	7,500	9,711	17,211
Botchi and Koppi River: Sportfishing assessment	11,000	4,000	15,000

### **Marketing and demonstration tours**

Late summer and fall are the best times to visit nature reserves. Tourist activities during these Months represent most of the potential revenues from ecotourism. For these reasons, WWF staff spent the summer quarter leading demonstration tours and conducting site visits to our projects. These tours and visits represent important marketing tools because they introduce professional tour operators and journalists to the area. We expect demonstration tours in summer 2000 to generate tourist business in summer 2001. This is consistent with industry standards wherein tour operators typically book tours a full year in advance.

Highlights from the summer/fall field season include the following events:

- **Amur River cruise.** WWF organized a six-day cruise down the lower Amur River to Komsomolsk zapovednik. Directed by Dr. Yuri Darman, the cruise featured an international discussion of storks and cranes and included a large Chinese delegation. Based on this experience, WWF will organize another Amur River Cruise in late summer 2001.
- **Wharton Business School at Lazovsky zapovednik.** As part of an international volunteer program, WWF brought three Wharton graduate students to the nature reserves of southern Primorye. They worked with Lazovsky zapovednik and other park directors to develop a business plan for the reserves.
- **Botchi River sportfishing assessment.** In cooperation with the Wild Salmon Center (WSC) and Botchinsky zapovednik, WWF explored the Botchi River to assess the feasibility of a sport-fishery for taimen and salmon. The assessment team was headed by fishery biologist Dr. Mikail Skopets, from TINRO in Magadan and Dr. Kitty Griswold from Oregon State, both expert fishermen and specialists for salmonids. In addition, the team included two professional fishing guides from Sweetwater Travel in Montana and Russian tour operator Alexander Nikulin from IAITO in Khabarovsk. A full report will be available next quarter.
- **USAID/Winrock Khabarovsk tour.** WWF hosted USAID and American consultants to visit Boshkekhtserksy zapovednik and the Utes Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in September. The group included about 15 people and featured two one-day excursions from the city.

In addition to these demonstration tours, WWF staff conducted site visits to eight project sites, all except for Kinganski zapovednik.

### **Budget issues**

In September, WWF modified the earlier budget format to match WWF standards. Since the program operated already one year with the old format, the change caused some confusion. However, WWF staff prepared a revised budget based on new expense categories. It includes an additional \$5,000 expense for WWF staff. Earlier, all ecotourism staff (Nelson, Kotliar, and Mirsyadyodva) worked as WWF contractors under personal grants. In the revised budget, the ecotourism program will pay for additional WWF/RFE administrative staff such as secretaries and office managers. The revised budget appears as in attachment.

### **Chronology**

- 1 – 7 July.** Amur River cruise and Oriental White Stork workshop. Komsomolsk.
- 8 July.** Khankaishii Zapovednik site visit. Spassk.
- 9 July.** Gamov Peninsula site visit. Slanyanka.
- 11 July.** Press conference. Vladivostok.
- 15 July.** Move to new office. Vladivostok.
- 15 to 31 August.** Wharton Business School in Lazovsky zapovednik.
- 30 –31 August.** Budget meeting with WWF/RPO Moscow.
- 4 – 10 September.** Meet WWF/US, Washington, DC and WSC, Portland. OR.
- 19 – 20 September.** Sustainable Forestry meeting. Khabarovsk.
- 21 September.** Ecotourism presentation to USAID/Winrock. Khabarovsk.
- 23 –24 September.** USAID field trip to Bolshekhektsterski and Utes.
- 28 September to 9 October.** Botchi River assessment trip.



**19 October.** Ecotourism presentation to WWF staff. Vladivostok.

**21 October.** Children's Tiger Festival. Ussirisky zapovednik.

**29 – 31 October.** Demonstration tour with US tour operators to Gamov.

**Plans for the next quarter:**

In the next quarter, the ecotourism program will focus on monitoring infrastructure building, projects and marketing activities. Specifically, we plan to:

- Purchase materials and begin building at each project site
- Identify specific tour routes in each nature reserve and develop price lists
- Develop a WWF/RFE ecotourism website
- Define and market specific demonstration tours for next summer
- Invite tour operators from US, Europe and Japan to visit
- Prepare an ecotourism strategy report outlining market potential, future opportunities, and options for future support.

**3. *Providing assistance to improve fire response capability including:***

*3.1. Increase public awareness on fire prevention – Design a National Strategy*

*3.2. Improve interagency cooperation on fire identification and suppression*

*3.3. Provide technical assistance on purchasing radio communication equipment and fire fighting equipment for mobile forest fire fighting teams*

**Major Implementation Accomplished this Quarter (Task 3.1.):**

- The National Strategy on Public Education and Awareness in Forest Fire Prevention (Strategy) was discussed among different people in the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), it was finally adopted by the MNR.
- The Strategy was translated into English and submitted to USAID.
- A contest for the logo and slogan of the national campaign for forest fire prevention was held in Moscow in the Forest Museum on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2000. Representatives from the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources, The World Conservation Union (IUCN), WWF, mass media were presented (see attached logo).
- The Forest Department of the MNR adopted the logo and slogan.
- A press conference presenting the results of the whole project and the Strategy was held in Khabarovsk on September 27, 2000. Representatives from USAID were presented. The results achieved by each activity were presented and discussed with USAID delegation in Khabarovsk on September 21, 2000.
- Preparation for a study tour to the US to learn the US experience of the Smokey the Bear Campaign was done;
- Further realization of the Strategy was discussed with Peter Owston and Lyudmila Vikhrova in Khabarovsk.

Due to reorganization of the Russian Federal Forest Service and several changes in positions of the key persons at federal (Moscow) and local (Khabarovsk, Vladivostok) level, the process of

approving the Strategy by the key agency was a little delayed. However, it was presented and approved in accordance with agreed schedule.

**Plans for the next quarter:**

- Realization of the Strategy in the territory of Primorsky and Khabarovsk krai will be discussed with Winrock and USAID.
- Tamara Rusina, Coordinator of WWF Forest program in the RFE and Vladimir Dmitriev, Certification Coordinator of WWF RPO will visit the US for the Smokey Bear campaign training.

**Major Implementation Accomplished this Quarter (Task 3.2.):**

The idea of establishment of Coordination Center in Khabarovsk krai was proposed and discussed. Due to the reorganization of the Russian Federal Forest Service at the federal and local levels, the key persons who were engaged in process of development of interagency cooperation have been changed. Several meetings were held to discuss the situation and solution. One possible way is to establish the Coordination Center in Khabarovsk krai, based on Sosnovka educational center, which meets all requirements. It is not necessary to spend additional money for its maintenance. Mr. V.M.Kolomytsev, Head of Khabarovsk Forest Management Department and Mr. V.F. Pominov, Director of Sosnovka Educational center, preliminarily adopted the idea.

**Plans for the next quarter:**

We propose to discuss the possibility to start realization of the completed and adopted Strategy in Primorsky and Khabarovsk krai instead of developing cooperation on fire identification and suppression, which became ineffective because of reorganization of the Forest Service.

**Major Implementation Accomplished this Quarter (Task 3.3.):**

- All radio stations were distributed and used actively and efficiently in forest fire allocation and suppression.
- Radio stations were placed in Khabarovsk krai according to the scheme developed together with US specialists.
- The ceremony of passing the equipment has been widely reported in mass media.
- An assessment of using the radios and fire fighting equipment by the Khabarovsk Forest Management Department for fire suppression and early detection has shown that 30% decrease in the numbers of forest fires in this summer and fall forest fire seasons. This is a very good result.
- The equipment for mobile forest fire fighting brigades was delivered in accordance with the agreed scheme (see attached file – list of equipment distribution).
- Establishment of mobile fire fighting brigades was completed.

- Agreement for 5 years was signed between WWF RPO and Russian Federal Forest Service on “Securing Amur tiger habitat from forest fires”.
- Letters from Administrations of Khabarovsky and Primorsky krai received on using the equipment in forest fire suppression in the territory of Amur tiger habitat.
- Each piece of the equipment was passed in the presence of an independent person, who inspected the equipment.
- The logos of WWF and USAID were fixed on every piece of the fire-fighting equipment.
- The 1-st mobile fire-fighting brigade in Oborsky leskhoz of Khabarovsky krai was inspected on July 29, 2000 (together with V.Dmitriev, WWF RPO Program Coordinator).
- A ceremony of signing documents of passing the equipment to leskhoz took place on September 27, 2000, at a press conference held by WWF. Representatives from USAID, WWF, MNR, Administrations of Khabarovsky krai, and mass media were presented.
- On September 27, 2000, representatives from USAID, WWF and MNR visited Oborsky leskhoz to inspect the fire-fighting equipment of the 1-st mobile fire-fighting brigade and met the staff of leskhoz.
- All targets were attained. There were some difficulties with registering the equipment in Federal Automobile Inspection.

**Plans for the next quarter:**

- There will be control over use and maintenance of the radio stations. US radio specialists will be addressed if it is necessary.
- Leskhoz, where mobile fire-fighting brigades are based, will keep, maintain the fire-fighting equipment and prepare it for fire-risk season.
- Agreements, which regulate activities of mobile fire-fighting brigades, will be concluded.
- Information about preparing fire-fighting equipment for fire-risk season, forest fires situation development, using equipment in forest fire suppression, and results of brigade activity will be available for general public.
- The logos of WWF and USAID will be kept on every piece of fire-fighting equipment.
- In the end of November 2000, there will be a presentation of the mobile fire-fighting brigade based in Chuguevka, Primorsky krai. Journalists from regional mass media will be presented.

**4. Ensuring the sustainability of the USAID funded project results****Major Implementation Accomplished this Quarter:**

No major activities were conducted in this quarter.

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